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history. Although some of these tribes did at one time offer a stout resistance to the conquests of Alexander, and formed part of the kingdom of Bactria, founded by the Macedonians, still in the present day it is difficult to conceive the possibility of a well-organised and homogeneous state being founded in this region. When we moreover remember that this basin of the sources of the Oxus is closed in on the north, east and south by mountains from 15,000 to 18,000 feet high, and across which the roads for pack-animals are few and difficult to traverse, we must arrive at the conclusion that all idea of converting this region into a rich *entrepôt* for a trade with India must be abandoned.

The same mournful conviction impresses itself on our minds when we glance at the course of the Oxus beyond the southern confines of Badakhshan, Vokhan, Karatigen and beyond Termez and Balkh. Commencing from the first of these two latter points as far as Pitniak, the first town of the Oasis of Kharesm, and a distance of about 540 miles, the settled population, as it is well known, keeps aloof from the sultry valley of the Jihoon. The banks of the river along the whole of this extent are occupied by small towns and villages which occur near ferries or at the intersections of caravan-routes. Hence, although the river, as at Chardjui, has a breadth of 235 fathoms, and a depth of 4 fathoms, there is but little chance of its ever becoming a great highway to India from Europe. When we also consider that the shores of the Sea of Aral are so barren as to have defied all the attempts hitherto made at founding even a small settlement on them, that the Aral itself is separated from Russia by intervening steppes 530 miles broad, and lastly seeing the utter impossibility of modifying the characteristics of the nomad marauders, we shall be justified in asserting that even in the remote future the Oxus can only be a secondary channel for the advance of industry and civilisation. It is difficult to surmise whether civilisation will penetrate to its sources—the prolific birthplace of metals and precious stones—from the north-west, from the Aral or from the south over the Hindu-Kush. I, myself, am rather inclined to think, and I hope my opinion will not mortify the patriotism of my fellow members, that its advent must be expected from the latter quarter.

NOTES AND ADDENDA.

I SHALL here direct attention to some of those points of the geography of the Bolor which still remain doubtful, or respecting which we possess contradictory accounts.

I. It may firstly be asked, Where is the southern extremity of the Bolor? Without going so far as to place the limit of this range at Tutukan-Mutkhani

peak, which evidently belongs to the system of the Hindu-Kush, the Push-tikhar Mountain, spoken of by Humboldt, may be accepted as this extremity; the position, however, of this elevation is not accurately known to us. On Macartney's map the Pandj, or middle branch of the Oxus, is shown flowing out of it; but is the mountain really situated to the north-west of Karshu, as it should be if the Vokhan Valley visited by Wood and the southern extremity of Sarykul lie in latitude $37^{\circ} 27'$, and longitude $91^{\circ} 33'$ E. of Ferro; that is, not more than about 20 miles from the first point. With respect to this nothing positive can be said. That the town of Karshu is situated close to high mountains is an undoubted fact; but apparently the highest of these, forming the knot or connecting link of the Bolor system with the Kuen-Lun, Hindu-Kush, and even Himalayas, rises not to the north of Karshu, but south of it, in latitude $36^{\circ} 40'$, and longitude $91^{\circ} 92'$ E. of Ferro. The excellent map of Strachey at least leads one to suppose this, and some statements of our German traveller tend to confirm the same idea. Thus in latitude about 36° on the map referred to we find, stretching from west to east, the snow-clad Lopsha range, at the northern slopes of which Lake Tumbel and others are marked; high snowy mountains are then shown at the upper sources of the Ardinig, which, with every probability of truth, may be taken for the beginning of the river Kaman, an affluent of the Cabul. These latter mountains are situated due south of Karshu, at a distance of only about 27 miles from that town. It is particularly satisfactory to find that 'The Travels' supply us with the means for filling up on the map the space to the north-west of the Indus and to the westward of Gilgit. These parts have been generally, and correctly too, marked "terra incognita," "unexplored," &c., on European maps. A review of the materials afforded by 'The Travels' could only be properly made in a separate geographical memoir, which would not embrace the Pamir. Suffice it here to say that apparently no such marked disconnection really exists between the systems of the Bolor, Kuen-Lun, Himalaya, and Hindu-Kush, as stated by Humboldt. At all events the three first appear to have been formed by one upheaval, the axis of which runs in a direction from north-west to south-east, while the southernmost masses extend in parallel rows. In this manner the Kuen-Lun would not appear to be a prolongation of the Hindu-Kush; and this view is confirmed by Thomson, Strachey, and even Shakespeare, who do not consider the Kuen-Lun to be an independent chain, distinct from the high table-lands of Ladakh and Baltistan, but only as its northern ridge or belt, in the same way that the Himalayas form its southern limit. Do not the two main chains marked on the accompanying map parallel to the rivers Bolor and Kara-Golu, form in a similar manner the confines of the high plateau to which the designation of the Pamir is generally applied? Moreover, if the table-land of North-western Thibet rises, as stated by Thomson, at the sources of the Shaek, to 17,500 feet, will the Pamir in such case have the exclusive right to be called the "roof of the world"? These are two questions of considerable interest.

II. The second doubtful point in the geography of the Bolor arises on a comparison of Klaproth's map and the statements of our traveller with the words of Huen-tsan, relative to two streams flowing out of Dragon's Lake to the east and west respectively. It may, I think, be taken for granted, as being beyond all doubt, that Lake Kara-kul has only one outlet—the Yaman-Yar or Yapuar. What is that river, then, which is alleged to flow westward from Dragon's Lake? Even supposing that Huen-tsan speaks of Dzarik-kul, the matter still remains clouded in doubt. Rian-kul cannot be taken for Dragon's Lake, inasmuch as no pass or mountain-cleft is known to exist between it and Kara-kul, and besides, no outlets are shown from it either on Klaproth's march-route or on the map of our traveller.

III. With reference to the Pamir, the rather delicate doubt arises as to whether the Bami-dunia of Lieutenant Wood is, strictly speaking, identical

with the Pamir, as Humboldt supposed it to be. By only extending this appellation to the whole centre portion of the Bolor highland, as is done by Son-Yun, can the contradiction be reconciled? The form of this high upland is so natural to the alpine region between Ferganah and India, that other valleys, even more than 15,000 feet above the level of the sea, may be found to exist. The following is an enumeration of five such valleys:—Mangulak, Pamir, the plateau between Aksu and Vokhan, the parts adjoining Sary-kul and the highlands near Kulsha lakes, probably near Sary-kul.

IV. Turning northwards from the sources of the Oxus, I shall now allude to another problematical feature of the Bolor uplands. From the Terek-taù mountain-knot, where the southern chain of the Tian-shan and the eastern branch of the Bolor are intercepted, the maps of Klaproth and Zimmermann show the head of the small Asferah-chai stream as flowing westwards. Klaproth extends it interrogatively to the bed of the Syr-Daria, in the direction of Kokan. Is this Asferah-chai identical with the Galinglik rivulet of our traveller, or does the latter form one of the sources of the Zarafshan, which apparently must be prolonged eastwards from the meridian of 88°, where the border-line of Khanikof's map comes in? If the Asferah-chai does really rise in the snows of the Terek-taù or Kashgar-Davan, then it is a considerable river, with a course extending over 200 miles, and must be considered as one of the largest affluents of the Jaxartes on the left.

V. The last remark I propose to make is one which affects the hydrography of the Oxus in an important degree. The three chief branches of this river—the Bolor, Duvan, and Sharud—may be recognised as uniting in one stream, but is the Aksu, which flows more northwards than any of the others, the real source of the Zarafshan, or does this river, likewise bending southwards, also enter the system of the Oxus, giving the latter its own name (Oxus—Aksu?) which has been preserved by ancient writers? In the absence of accurate data, this question may, with equal probability of truth, be solved either in the way I have done it on the accompanying map, or by marking the course of the Aksu southwards from the western part of the Pamir.

M. VENIUKOF.

XX.—*The Belors and their Country.* By M. VENIUKOF.

Translated, for the Royal Geographical Society, from the 'Journal of the Imperial Geographical Society of St. Petersburg, 1862,' by J. MICHELL, Esq.

IF on the map we connect Cabul, Badakhshan, Yarkend and Cashmere by straight lines we shall obtain a square surface, the physical features and peculiarities of the inhabitants of which constitute it in all probability the most inaccessible and obscure part of Asia. Burnes and all the other travellers who passed along the valley of the Cabul River visited the southern confines of this region, while those on the north were skirted by Huen-Tsan, Marco-Polo, Benedict Goez and Wood, and those on the east by Cunningham, Thomson, Strachey and the brothers Schlagintweit. With respect to its interior, however, no accurate information has been hitherto furnished, and it is only owing to a fortunate discovery made in the archives of the Military Topo-